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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/597,853	08/09/2006	Tomoori Odaka	60303.61/ok	7131
54070	7590	03/12/2009	EXAMINER	
HITACHI METALS, LTD. C/O KEATING & BENNETT, LLP 1800 Alexander Bell Drive SUITE 200 Reston, VA 20191				SHEEHAN, JOHN P
1793		ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER
			NOTIFICATION DATE	
			DELIVERY MODE	
			03/12/2009	
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

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Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/597,853	ODAKA ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	John P. Sheehan	1793	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 09 August 2006.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-16 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-16 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on 09 August 2006 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>8/9/2006 and 12/21/2006</u> .	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ .

DETAILED ACTION

Priority

1. Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file.

Specification

2. The Examiner acknowledges receipt of the substitute specification submitted August 9, 2006. The substitute specification has been approved for entry by the Examiner.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.
4. Claims 1 to 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.
 - I. In claims 6 and 7 (line 2) the meaning of the term, "atomicity ratio" is not clear. The only definition for the term, "atomicity", that the Examiner was able to locate was in the context of data bases. The use of this term in the context of the instant claims is not clear. The Examiner questions

whether applicants mean atomic ratio. If this is the case, applicants are advised that this rejection can be overcome by changing “atomicity” to atomic.

II. In claim 15 it is not clear what it is that applicants are attempting to claim. For example, it is not clear where the “dehydrogenation process” fits into the sequence of process steps.

III. In claim 1, the penultimate line, the antecedent for the phrase, “the solidified alloy” is not clear. For example, does this term refer to the “solidified alloy” recited in claim 1, line 10 or the heat treated solidified alloy produced in the maintaining step recited in lines 11 and 12?

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102/103

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Tomizawa et al. (Tomizawa '737, US Patent Application Publication US 2004/0163737).

Tomizawa '737 teaches a R-T-B based rare earth magnet alloy having a composition that encompasses the alloy composition recited in claim 16 (Paragraph 0024) and which is made by a process which is very similar to the process recited in claim 1 from which product by process claim 16 depends ((paragraphs 0029, 0059 and 0060). Tomizawa '737 teaches that the concentration of the element R_H in the main phase is higher than the concentration of the R_H element in the other phases (paragraph 0061). Tomizawa '737 teaches that the grains that form the main phase have a short axis (minor-axis) of 3 to 10 µm as recited in claims 16 (paragraph 0028).

The claims and Tomizawa '737 differ in that Tomizawa '737, although teaching a process which is similar to the process recited in applicants' independent claim 1 from which product by process claim 16 depends, does not teach the process cooling step subsequent to the heat treatment step recited in independent claim 1.

However, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made would have considered the invention to have been obvious because Tomizawa '737's process and applicants' process are very similar and the second cooling step recited in applicants' product by process claim does not necessarily lend patentability to the claimed product, MPEP 2113.

"[E]ven though product-by-process claims are limited by and defined by the process, determination of patentability is based on the product itself. The patentability of a product does not depend on its method of

production. If the product in the product-by-process claim is the same as or obvious from a product of the prior art, the claim is unpatentable even though the prior product was made by a different process." *In re Thorpe*, 777 F.2d 695, 698, 227 USPQ 964, 966 (Fed. Cir. 1985).

Allowable Subject Matter

8. Claims 1 to 15 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action.
9. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: The primary reason for the indication of allowance of claims 1 to 15 is that none of the references alone or in combination teach or suggest a method of making a rare earth-transition metal-(B, C, N, Al, Si, P) based rare earth magnet having the composition recited in the instant claims comprising:

preparing a melt of the rare earth-transition metal-(B, C, N, Al, Si, P) alloy recited in the claims;

cooling the melt of the alloy to a temperature of 700 °C to 1000 °C as a first cooling step, thereby making a solidified alloy;

maintaining the solidified alloy at a temperature within the range of 700 °C to 900 °C for 15 seconds to 600 seconds; and

cooling the solidified alloy to a temperature of 400 °C or less as a second cooling process.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John P. Sheehan whose telephone number is (571) 272-1249. The examiner can normally be reached on T-F (7:30-5:00) Second Monday Off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Roy King can be reached on (571) 272-1244. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/John P. Sheehan/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1793

jps